1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

d. The form of Nyakyusa society

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover so often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and re-absorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Legard, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 50–167.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 149.
[3] A. Hemansky, *Deutsche Arbeit am Nyasa* (1894); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1910).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

•797
743
692
361
491

MAP III. RUNGWE

[facing p. 16(a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

GWE DISTRICT

[Facing p. 16 (b)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KuiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations, of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts', of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Nguude FN17
Nyakyusa

less separate, but as time goes on the demarcation between them becomes less and less clear. In most chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa the ceremony is still observed, but in the country of Porokoto, near Rungwe mission, it has not been performed for a generation, and there the territorial separation between young and old is much less definite than in other chiefdoms. The maintenance of the age-village system is ultimately dependent upon the moving aside of the old men in each generation to make room for their sons.

The reason commonly given for the omission of the ceremony in Ngonde is that since the country has become more densely populated there is no longer room for two chiefs to divide the country of their father. The old system of division was adapted to an expanding population in a relatively empty country, and the two young chiefs ordinarily ruled a greater area, and more men, than their father. Further, it is said, the ritual was in one aspect a preparation for war, and fighting between chiefdoms has ceased. These explanations are obviously not adequate, since the ceremony is still performed in Nyakyusa chiefdoms in which there is neither room for expansion, nor war. Its omission may be related rather to the general abandoning of traditional rituals in Ngonde. Forty-five per cent of the people of Ngonde, including many leading men, are professing Christians, and there is a very general scepticism of the efficacy of traditional rituals. This scepticism extends even to those who are not Church members.

In Porokoto's chiefdom the 'coming out' was omitted partly because of a dispute over the succession; but there, also, many of the traditional rituals are not regularly performed (as they are in other parts of Nyakyusa country), because the proportion of Christians is high since Porokoto's chiefdom adjoins the main Moravian mission station, Rungwe, and because pagan faith in these rituals has therefore been shaken. As Porokoto (who is not a professing Christian himself) put it, when explaining why he had not performed the twin ritual for his own twin daughters: 'We see that nothing happens to the Christians when they omit the rituals, so we begin to say "What value have they?" ' Thus not only are Christians forbidden by their Churches to participate in the ritual acts of the 'coming out' but pagans themselves begin to doubt their necessity.

The presence of Christians further complicates the traditional

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

village organization since many of them live in separate Christian villages, or sections of villages. When the first German missionaries arrived among the Nyakyusa in 1891, they bought land from the chiefs and village headmen at the different points at which they decided to settle, and villages of Christian converts have grown up on this land. The nucleus of these villages consisted of Ngonde workmen who came from Karonga (where a Scots mission was already established) to help the Germans build their mission houses. Later, local Nyakyusa who came to work at the mission stations built there too, and a party of ninety slaves, rescued by the German administration from the Arab leader, Mlozi, were given into the care of the missionaries and settled on the land they had bought. These slaves were from other tribes, not Nyakyusa, and there was difficulty in repatriating them to their home villages. The foreigners and Nyakyusa who remained on mission land were those who accepted Christian teaching. Practically all the early converts were already working for the missionaries and living near them before their baptism, and later converts were encouraged to move out of their pagan villages and join the new villages of Christians on mission land. On the other hand, any who left the Church, or who were suspended for practising polygyny or for some other cause, were, and still are, liable to be turned off mission land by the missionary in charge. Thus these villages comprise only professing Christians.

In the villages on mission land there is a certain division of authority between Church and State. Up to 1914 such villages were treated as being outside the control of any chief. A Nyakyusa informant described the position thus: 'The missionaries said that they had bought their land and they would not admit any authority of the chief over it. They collected the taxes for the (German) Government themselves. The chief never went into "European country" (*Kilimpe*) for anything. The people there did not cook for him. The missionary used to be the chief in the European country, but since the English came it is different.' Under the system of Indirect Rule the administrative authority of chiefs over Africans living on mission-owned land is recognized, taxes are paid through the chief, and civil cases between Christians may be taken to the chief's court (*vide infra*, p. 158). But chiefs still treat Christians living on mission land rather differently from those living on land which has not been so alienated. They

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F7617 Ngonde F7617 Nyakyusa

are, for example, chary of calling out Christians to carry loads when a Government official comes by wanting porters, or of sending their messengers into the mission villages when they require food for any purpose. The leaders of the villages on mission land are not headmen appointed at the 'coming out' (in which the Christian villages do not share), but 'elders' or 'peacemakers' appointed by the Church (usually the missionary and 'session'); and it is under such a leader that the members of a village on mission land rally when they are called out to co-operate in some activity, such as a pig hunt, in which each village acts as a unit.

Even on mission land, however, the traditional village organization and age-grouping are in some measure maintained. Boys leave their fathers' houses well before they reach puberty and build together a little distance away. There they are joined by younger brothers until the village is closed and the youngsters are told to start a new village of their own. Where there is plenty of land, as at Ibete mission in Selya, the division between the generations is still quite clear, but where good building sites are scarce, as on Rungwe mission land, the divisions are blurred. As we have seen, the maintenance of clear territorial divisions between the generations depends upon the old men moving aside and leaving the greater part of the land for the more numerous ruling generation. Such a movement never occurs on mission land, which is not part of the land of any chief. It follows that territorial separation of age groups cannot there continue for long.

Many Nyakyusa Christians nowadays prefer not to live on mission land, on the ground that there is less security of tenure, and less opportunity to develop coffee planting, on mission land than off it (*vide infra*, p. 48). At the same time the Moravian and Berlin missions have ceased to press their early policy of gathering converts at mission stations,[1] so that more and more Christians are coming to live intermingled with pagan neighbours. Very often, however, Christians choose to gather in one section of a village: scholars who have decided to become Christians often get permission to build near their school; they choose to move out of the pagan villages in which they have been living in order to

[1] The Swiss mission in Ngonde never sought to gather its converts into separate villages, recommending rather that Christians should remain in their own homes and influence their pagan neighbours.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

built with Christian contemporaries, and sometimes the teacher is himself quite a young man and builds with them. Members of two independent churches, the Watch Tower[1] and the followers of Ngemela, have also built apart with fellow believers. Each such group has its own name, and a sense of unity, and its religious leader is recognized as the leader in secular affairs also, but politically it is a section of a larger pagan village of contemporaries. We know of no case in which a purely Christian group living off mission land has been given status as a village at the 'coming out'.

Since the same word, *dikpanga*,[2] is used both for a village and its sub-divisions the distinction between village and village-section is often not clear in ordinary speech, but it is apparent at the 'coming out', and in legal procedure.

[1] The Watch Tower (Jehovah's Witnesses) is of course a world organization, but Nyakyusa followers were organized under their own leaders and so far as we could discover were subject to no outside supervision between 1933 and 1938.

[2] *Dikpanga* is also used sometimes for the following of a chief, and nowadays for a congregation or church; cf. the Xhosa *ibandla*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and need not be recapitulated. The essential fact here is that the village is the group which allocates land to a new-comer, and which maintains the rights of individuals who have moved and who wish to return.

Once established in a village, a man can hoe any ground which has not yet been cultivated, and thereby make it his own.[1] No reference need be made to the headman and other villagers, provided that he does not encroach on land formerly cultivated by others, or on the main pasture land. There is no limit to the acreage he may use. Pasture-land is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has exclusive rights to any portion of it. Every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures, and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the village headman in consultation with his neighbours. But no one has the right to cut trees near the village (unless they are ones he has planted or inherited) without the permission of his fellow villagers. The death of one man we knew, the younger brother of a chief, was attributed to the fact that he had cut a branch from a self-sown tree growing in the arable land of a village in which he was a new-comer, without asking permission of his fellow villagers. It was said that 'the owners' of the village were angry and killed him because he had not asked their leave before lopping the tree. He had wanted the branch to make an axe-handle.

The land rights of Christians living in the chiefdoms are identical with those of their pagan fellows; but those who live on mission land are in a different position. They are tenants of the mission, paying an annual rent of 1s., and liable to be evicted by the missionary in charge if they leave the Church. A man so driven out loses the coffee-trees he has planted. One Christian informant remarked: 'We do not think it good to plant coffee on mission land because very often a man is turned out of the Church.' And at Rungwe mission even those moving voluntarily lose the coffee they have planted. Now all trees introduced by Europeans have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even though he has moved to a different chiefdom, and Christians feel that they have greater security of ownership in coffee planted in the chiefdoms than in that on mission land. The difficulties likely to arise at a 'coming out' are ignored, and

[1] Ibid., pp. 41-2.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chieftaincy will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

3. *Building*

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unroofed. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

J:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyanyuru

29. CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM OF WITCHCRAFT

Nsangalafa (Christian Elder, an early convert).

'At first when we repented, the missionaries asked us whether we believed in witchcraft, and we said: "Yes, there is witchcraft", and we told them about it and the wounds found in the bellies of people who have been killed by witchcraft. So the missionaries said to us: "When there is a death tell us, and we shall go and look." I was taken once by Klaus (a missionary) to a death. I was afraid to go near the corpse—everyone was afraid—but the missionary stood over the grave and looked at the corpse and even put his hand inside (the stomach). The person was said to have died of *ipoke* (a kind of sorcery), but Klaus said he had died of a disease of the chest. He told people to come and look. Mwaipopo (the chief) was there but he refused to come and look; they all refused. After some time I came and Klaus showed me. In this way we have been and examined corpses, and we have never seen the wounds of witchcraft. . . . Klaus used to go round to funerals, examining corpses. . . . Ndabele here has seen a corpse which the pagans said had a python. Last week Ndabele went to a funeral near here and the pagans said there was a python inside: the woman (who had died) had been a witch. He said: "Let's see the python, let's see it", but no one could show it to him.'

[p. 254]

2: Wilson E-5 (1924-1938)1957 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is not due to a contagious disease

J. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

The Spirit-Ridden Konde

CHAPTER I

The Land & the People

UNGONDE, as the Konde people call their country, lies around the north end of Lake Nyasa. Northwards of that point it stretches for about fifty miles, and southwards for roughly the same distance. Like all their neighbours, the Konde belong to the great Bantu race, which occupies Africa from the Cape to the Congo, and beyond.

The lake shore plain is narrow, fertile, and populous, with its centre at Karonga, where there is a British Magistracy, some trading stores, and a station of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. Beyond the plain the tribe, under various local names, reaches up into the mountains on both sides of the lake. Outside of Nyasaland, and northwards across the Songwe, it covers a large area in what was once German East Africa, but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Here, too, the plain is low, fertile, and populous as at Karonga. Northwards of the plain lie the healthy uplands of Mwenibe and

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

13/ Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Mwaka.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
36/ lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kiliva River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, so uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bundali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7417 Ngonde F7417

highlanders closely related to the Konde. Here, at Isoko, is another station of the Scottish Churches Mission. /33 /01 [791]

Eastwards of the Tukuyu uplands lie the Kings Mountains, better known as the Livingstone Range, near the foot of which lies the Itete Station of the Scottish Churches Mission. From here one gets a view of lake and mountain, river and plain, which may well be regarded as one of the finest of the kind in Africa. The evening sun, shining upon the great mountain mass, reveals hundreds of crevices and folds in which lie tiny houses, beside waterfalls or rapidly dashing streams; while up to the summits stretch the wheat-fields, green or golden yellow in the evening light. At one's feet sleep the countless villages, banana hidden; and away in the distance Lake Nyasa reflects the last gleams of departing day. /33 [791]

Over the mountains lies the country of the Kings people, a land indescribably rough and mountainous, but here and there well watered, with fertile valleys producing wheat, oats, peas, in abundance, besides the usual African products. Here the cold is so great that during part of the year many of the people sleep in pits hollowed out of the ground, and heated by fires which are extinguished at bed-time. /33 /01

Northwards the upland valley is bounded by the Igale Hills, from the top of which one looks to the lofty Mbeya Mountain, which from one point of view presents an astonishing likeness to Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury Crags at Edinburgh. Beyond Igale live the Songo and the Safwa, the former a vigorous

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

me by the son of one of the councillors who stood near him:

"Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Mogomo: I am lord of that country, I Kyuhura," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Mogomo; E! Kyuhura." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

Meantime in the north internal warfare went on intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925): 1925
F7617 .N5 Gonde F7617

young gathering around the white man, and lending themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day approaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Hengo, Angoni, and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the European, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unenslaved condition—and, again, it may not. Educationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

J. Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

in any numbers, the trained assistants in Mission work who form one of the principal successes of Missions among other tribes.

But this does not imply that the Konde are without virtues. They are very shy, and respectful to authority, the latter a characteristic that counts for many defects in the minds of those who consider subservience the primary virtue in a native of Africa. Their conservative nature prevents them being too free with strangers, and they will not greet a passing European, either until he takes the initiative, or until long friendship has convinced them that it will not be regarded as an undue liberty. Once their confidence has been gained, they are found to be merry, laughing, and bright. The friendliness of children is an attractive feature of the tribe. And the adults are most willing to be friendly also, provided the first advances are made by the European. When one begins to know them intimately, it becomes obvious that their backwardness is not due to lack of capacity, but to an unyielding conservatism, which leads them to think long—and some have been thinking for a generation—before committing themselves to anything new. "We will think about it" is a common response to invitations to take their place alongside the more progressive tribes. Yet with it all they are a lovable people, responsive to friendliness, deeply attached to each other, and to all who rightly claim the name of friend.

Slavery is, formally at least, a thing of the past. It is asserted by natives that some men and women are still in slavery, but while that is not impossible, no one

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representative, or by the chief if he can be induced to do so, the person who wishes the rain to stop, ties a bunch of feathers to his spear, dips the feathers in red ochre, and sets the spear upright in his garden. Or if he wishes the prohibition to act over a wide area, the spear with the feathers is set up in some hidden place among the reeds on the lake shore. The rain will presently stop. One man well known to me, takes a small piece of polished blackthorn in his hand, and wherever he goes the rain stops. His own faith in his powers, and the faith of many others, is quite beyond dispute. There is an old man not far from me whose family has possessed for many generations the power of causing the wind to blow, or to cease blowing, at will. The old man I speak of is believed to have exercised his powers quite successfully in 1923.

A very few Europeans are believed to possess power over the rain. In 1908 a house was being built at the Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia, the residence of the Scottish missionary, the Rev. Robert Laws, C.M.G. The house was still unfinished when the rains were due, and no rain fell. At last, some time in January, the roofing was finished, and next day rain fell in torrents. Dr. Laws had removed the embargo! Similar powers are ascribed to another well-known missionary, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Angoniland. And still, if the rain is too much or too little, the people say, "Ah! it is the Great One at Livingstonia. Why is he doing this?"

Prayer for rain is offered in one place or another

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

spear, and that the land would be filled with wonders of which no man had ever heard. 791

How far the original form of these prophecies has been modified by experience, I do not undertake to say. All who pretend to knowledge of the subject vigorously deny any modification. Whether the actual performances of the white men have satisfied the expectations aroused by the prophecies, is a question susceptible of more than one answer. The great mass of the people would certainly not rejoice at the departure of the Europeans; nevertheless there are some who would be glad to see the last of them. Long before the Great War, prophecies were freely circulating among the people, that the Germans would go away, and be succeeded by white men of another land. Just now similar prophecies are being made about the British, who are to be succeeded by another white race as yet unknown. The fact, which is well known to many people, that some "doctors" are seeking for a medicine which will cause the white man to disappear, is significant.

There is a tradition that a series of forecasts was made long ago: the Great War, the influenza which followed it, the great earthquake of 1919, and finally a great darkness which is still to come.

The progress of Christianity has not destroyed the faith, especially of the heathen, in the local prophets; and it is not improbable that Christians still retain a conviction that these men were not wholly without Divine guidance. The chief Fwebe, when I asked him whether in all cases smallpox forecold had actually 791 [illegible]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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754 is the act of God, let it work, His house is great.
789 But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is.
I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *mwayiwaman*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

"You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

781 There are numerous stories, which, if they do
•797 nothing else, illustrate the naive faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1910, when Kobera's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1913 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

"You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after moving angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

J. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *ngulube* is a whitish snake, about four feet long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankonono, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *pani* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the makers of the drug; should he, however, kill the snake, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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for labour and food. There are also a few small plantations owned by Europeans inside the district which fulfil a similar function. 20,000 acres only of land have been alienated in Rungwe District by the two Governments which have in turn controlled it; and it is the declared intention of the present Government to alienate no more. Of the alienated land only 2,500 acres is at the moment in use.

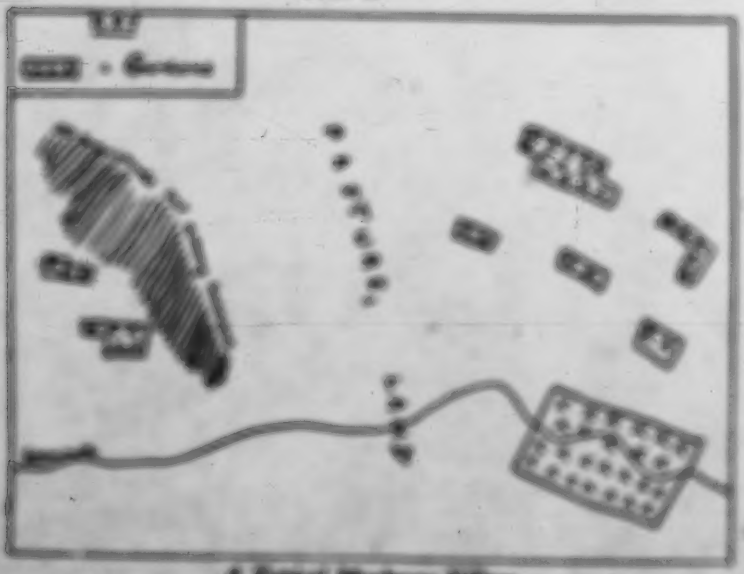
Missionaries of the Berlin Lutheran and the Moravian missions have been in the district since 1891, and a substantial proportion, about 10%, of the population now professes Christianity. The Christians live, some in separate Christian villages, some scattered about among their pagan neighbours. In the Christian villages the traditional age grouping usually prevails, with elders and deacons taking the place of great-consanguines.

Such in outline is the form of society within which individual Nyakyusa hold property in land.

2. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD*

A village, as we have seen, usually consists of a group of houses built fairly close together with one or more blocks of garden land at some distance from them, while the village cattle graze the adjoining grass lands, to various different herds.

Plan 1



A Typical Nyakyusa Village

S. Wilson E-ϕ (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngoede FN17
Nyakyusa

him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the great-statesman, without men? As he had moved, the great-statesman would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed!"

The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more subtle in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

8. CONCLUSION

I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among these rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of vigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

enables us to accept it as broadly accurate. But from 1873 onwards our written records[1] begin to supplement the oral tradition.

A little before 1873 Mwalunga, another chief of Ngara, had succeeded Gwa Sapasi as the Kyungu; and in that year the Europeans first reached Ngonde. But about the same time Arab slave and ivory traders established themselves there also and for the next twenty years disputed its possession with the Europeans.

In 1873 Dr. Laws and his party made a voyage of exploration in the "Ilala" round the lake and visited Ngonde; and within the next six years both a Free Church of Scotland mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up there. The site they selected was on the lake shore in Kalonga's district and so became known by his name.[2] But the Arab traders were in Ngonde too. The Arabs sometimes traded with the people of Ngonde, sometimes fought them, while the African Lakes Corporation Agent tried to combine a lucrative trade with the Arabs and the protection of the people against them.

During the course of a fight with the Arabs Kyungu Mwalunga was killed and Mwabulambo, yet another chief of Ngara, was taken in his place. The soldiers of Ngonde at first wanted to take Malema, a chief of Ngalonga, but he fled from them; "they asked the Arab Mlozi to lend them men to look for him, but he hid in a tree and escaped them. So they took Mwabulambo."

It was fourteen years after the arrival of Dr. Laws before the British made any move to take over Ngonde; and in the interval Monteith Fotheringham, the African Lakes Agent, only just succeeded in maintaining himself against the Arabs, owing to the help of Captain F. D. (now Lord) Lugard. But in 1889 H. H. (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston arrived and made treaties both with the chiefs and the Arabs in Ngonde, and from then until 1896 the country formed part of the "sphere of influence" of the British South Africa Company. In 1893 Mlozi, the ruling Arab, openly refused to accept the new state of affairs and was hanged. And in the next year Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa (afterwards renamed Nyasaland).

About this time—the present Kyungu says it was in 1896—the soldiers of Ngonde deposed Kyungu Mwabulambo and made Mwakaba-

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[1] *Lakes and Mountains of Africa*, Blaxe, 1895.
Adventures in Nyassaland, L. M. Fotheringham, 1891.
The Rise of our East African Empire, F. D. Lugard, 1893.
British Central Africa, H. H. Johnston, 1897.
Fighting the Slave Hunters in Central Africa, A. J. Swann, 1910.
Laws of Livingstonia, W. P. Livingstone, 1921.
Africa Livingstone, D. J. M. Muir, 1923, &c.
Ngoli = Kyungu; the Kyalingonde = [illegible] being overdue.

175 177 [192]

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngunde FN17

492 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of chieftom and kaf, and by the religious exclusion of the Kyungu. Now every one of these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to exist and something radically different has been developed in its place. Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and permanent relationships now crosses Ngunde and links it to the outside world, the Kyungu rules his people in person, under Government. And the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" in these only possible in Ngunde to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule Ngunde to-day through the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngunde than it would be, say, through a committee of commoners chosen for their personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a status in Ngunde which is continuous, though not identical with that of the past.

178 Christianity has gained a great hold on Ngunde,* and has helped to undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it. 778 And the whole interwhinically organized system of pagan ritual is almost 787 dead. A few days after our arrival in Ngunde, in July 1937, the nobles of Ngunde organized the clearing out of the salem, for a special purpose. A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Nobles did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kyungu consented all courses to these things years ago and will go to manage without him. So I went and told Kalonga and Mwalumangala and Mwamugabwe, who is the master of the chiefs of Ngunde; it is their business to tell their juniors." But of the hundred odd chiefs and nobles in the Ngunde plain only four chiefs and a few nobles responded to the summons to put out their old fires and to bring the salem to Kyimilwe. How many commoners put out their fires I do not know, for we did not hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased. Neither is the old first-fruit ritual any longer performed.

The Scots Mission in Ngunde concentrated from the first on the conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The present Kyungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

* 10% of the population profess Christianity.

6-Wilson E-6 (1936-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

now abandoned his Christianity and taken a number of wives, he appears to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother, Mwangulaba, used to give the sultan of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them here, nor here, nor there." He subsequently admitted, however, that he did sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical taboos he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

That the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in witchcraft, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most persistent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.[1]

The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The losing of the public position of the Kyungu by his people, for instance, was largely kept up in former years because of his rain-making powers: he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim his service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.[2]

Thus again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance of power between the different political authorities. The Kyungu is no longer a magical object carefully secluded and controlled by the sultan of Ngonde; and as he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The sultan of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old theistic and witchcraft beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde still fear that they will fall ill if they offend their great-commoners, but none do so.[3] and it

[1] The same cannot be said of the Tonkwe, among whom, for various reasons, the missions have made the least converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Tonkwe the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

[2] Cf. infra p. 81

[3] One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

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Nyakyusa

the capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group from others. This group will here be referred to as "Nyakyusa proper." There to the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwambe* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanised as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Nkuli*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwambe, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Nkuli, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Nkuli and Penja number 130,000; the Konde of Nyasaland 30,000.*

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Europeans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five years and have made numerous converts. The German Administration followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

*Government Census figure.

9: Wilson
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[For data on the various Christian sects and their missionary activities, see category 116, pp. 166-202./

accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1] and the details need not be recapitulated here.

Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1935 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

Wilson R-6 (1934-1958) 1959
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CHAPTER III

THE "DIVINE KINGS"

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF "DIVINE KINGS"

Two kinds myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chiefdoms, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lufingo (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbaseke near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PalliKyala, near Ilemba at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-mo-Kyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1]

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is also used in the sense of 'the lord': a *chief in kyala gwaka* (his lord) to a commoner, a father *to kyala gwaka* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a *skinki to kyala* to his living kinsmen (*ungwaka ja kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PalliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuerer for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *Jala* in fact come from the same root. *Jyala* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. C. G. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District', *J.R.A.I.*, lvi (1926), p. 401). In Bena *ngulyama* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 198). In Gogo *mulyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Rowan, *The Wagogo*, p. 44). cf. Hehe, *Jala* 'to forget, to leave' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spreeburn, 1882).

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Bantologen, Neue Beiträge*, vol. 3, p. 68.

Wilson R-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal drama. [717]
must, an account of the illness of Kasitile (M), the leading priest [755]
of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed.
His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in
general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests [759]
(village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary
priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the prominent linking of misfortune [687]
with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of [787]
divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv)
the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western [797]
medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a [771]
Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of
turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance
attached to 'speaking out' (ukunyaa) and not leaving anger to [773]
smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking
out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for in wine
smiles.

The dramatis personae are:

Kasitile (M) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya [761]
Jane his senior and favourite wife
Jane's younger sister and co-wife
Kalyaba a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile [764]
Mwakyusa (118) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
Mwakyusa (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
Kimia *priest* (*i.e.* Kikongolaja Nayaniguo, Kyambo Kisali, *vide pp.* 194-5)
Nsolayo, Nyakasika, Kakogota — Village headmen of Mwaljanga (Ba) and priests of his grove, *vide pp.* 747, 845
Mwakasenga the elder a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
Mwakasenga the younger (Mwanilaggija) son of the elder who often acted in his place

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(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatitu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwele*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mwele*) the word "black" (*mtitu*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwele* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kaotile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we *rejoice* greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kaotile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptised. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptised with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kaotile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-1 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *Kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 69, 95). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The clearest version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the irrevocability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker asks his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the cattle they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1935 conservatives like Kaitila sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kaitila's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kaitila's disease, and Kaitila rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1935—Kaitila added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily *as an addition* to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9:Wilson E-S (1934-1955) 1959
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his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumunya* (above) have changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abapyaki*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*indonga ya bantu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use '*Lwembe*' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the traditional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-4 (1934-1951) 1959
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conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1952. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandizement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1933, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1933, and of the other chief himself in 1936, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

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the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. There other mission based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced.

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population, making the three main missions together, their converts form over 15 per cent of the total population.* Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglicans, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 19 per cent as against 18 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts.

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity

* Figures supplied by the courtesy of the missionaries directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		19,887
Lutherans		12,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		4,700
Last Church (Ngonde)	('independent')	10,500
[illegible]		
African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	600

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and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Structurally there is an expression of opposite tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and to the graves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the chiefs and bringing him back victorious, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates political changes in social status, and the public recognition of the bodies, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chiefdomship. Thus certainty in these matters is ensured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village headship often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. iv, 1931, p. 69.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-6.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 130-200, 227.

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structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. There there is evidence for one area alone, and the conversions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies.

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinsfolk to become a Christian,[1] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but election by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organisms of other types of association.

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[2] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 197-9.

[2] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-2.

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Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe District, commercially profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is constantly concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

The ideals of the gospel permeate still further. It is taken to imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproduction cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society? Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus changes in material symbols and changes in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Chikel in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in proper observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for cattle and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kings priests came to Lutanga 'in secret' and how they failed to install a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisinya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Kuikenmeiland Rural Survey. Vol. I, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. II, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

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found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the cessation of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

The early missionaries were very important as employers of labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the sole source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity could go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated, self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from Ba'Nyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a separation of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and religion, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at courts and camps at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] "The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite." Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

[illegible] and try to understand the nature and causes for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in local terms as such, but also in village and family organization, political authority and economic life.

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 193,000 in that District, but about 10,000 more were probably in the area temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), while about 5,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,500 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains to the north at 8,000 feet, and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the plateau down scarp of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore extremely large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 6,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" to the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and stoniness of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, large millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice, consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been recognized to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which [illegible] old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]

343. ordinary or to a row some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the Ndebele had a pen-engraved verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Mafila, whose husband lived some days to an village. She was a Christian - actually a church-elder. On the outside of her hemisphere-formed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and before she had written the word Isonto (church). Apart from a house near Lake Bysna, of which I took a photograph and which had very sophisticated and drastic drawings on its outside wall (motorbike, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides improved gateways to stay on fourth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except few gateways to the outside architraves of the wall.

343 In this house, approximately 9 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

344 The fourth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of forgetmenots near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-guarding to the posts. Though Mafila was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had heard that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in two more places, in the house of a widow, who - by the way - was also a Christian.

345. A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for stores only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had bed's seats, stools, baskets, Mafila's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

342. The other dwings is from quite a different district, that of Bumangwato. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called dwas, or kotse.